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Summary record of the 369th meeting
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Chair: Ms. Degener

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The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Consideration of reports submitted by parties to the Convention under article 35 (*continued*)

Initial report of Oman (CRPD/C/OMN/1; CRPD/C/OMN/Q/1 and CRPD/C/OMN/Q/1/Add.1)

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of Oman took places at the Committee table.*

2. **Mr. Al Kalbani** (Oman) said that the Ministry of Social Development, which was responsible for the implementation of the Convention in Oman, had attached great importance to the preparation of the State party's initial report (CRPD/C/OMN/1), ensuring the participation of a range of governmental and non-governmental bodies, including organizations of persons with disabilities. The Ministry had made a number of structural changes in 2011 and 2012 aimed at strengthening the framework for protection of the rights of persons with disabilities, most importantly the establishment of the Directorate General for Persons with Disabilities and the transfer of responsibility for the supervision of the Wafa' voluntary social centres from the private sector to the Ministry. The National Committee for the Care of Persons with Disabilities had also been restructured to include representatives of civil society and the private sector.

3. The Care and Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities Act had been adopted with the aim of strengthening services for persons with disabilities. The Ministry of Social Development had moved from a welfare model to a human rights-based approach, and that new approach was evident in its policies, plans, legislation and programmes and those of other relevant ministries. The Council of Oman had mandated committees to conduct exploratory visits to centres and departments to assess the services provided to persons with disabilities; those assessments would form the basis for the drafting of new legislation on the rights of persons with disabilities, in line with the Convention. At the policy level, the eighth and ninth five-year plans, the latter of which ran until 2020, included important provisions on the advancement of persons with disabilities in various sectors. The Ministry of Social Development's Social Action Strategy (2016–2025) and Executive Plan included an integrated focus on the rights of persons with disabilities. In 2014, the Ministry of Health had prepared an overview for the health system up to 2050, ensuring the health rights of persons with disabilities in all aspects.

4. Achievements at the institutional level included the allocation of a number of seats in the State Council to non-governmental organizations (NGOs), including an association for persons with disabilities, and the conclusion of a memorandum of understanding between the Ministry of Social Development and the Oman Human Rights Commission in 2015 concerning the transfer of the monitoring mechanism for the Convention to the Commission. A representative of persons with disabilities had been appointed to the Oman Human Rights Commission. In 2015, the National Centre for Statistics and Information had issued a booklet on Omanis with disabilities, based on the 2010 census data, including their geographical distribution, social and educational status, and the causes and degrees of disability, and in 2017 it had conducted a study on the situation of persons with disabilities. Financial support for services for persons with disabilities had been increased.

5. At the legislative level, the Consultative Council Election Act guaranteed the rights of citizens to vote and stand for election to the Council without discrimination based on disability. The new Criminal Code established specific penalties for rape and sexual molestation with a view to ensuring the protection of children with disabilities from sexual violence; it also provided for measures to protect children with disabilities from "honour crimes", in particular infanticide by the mother.

6. Rehabilitation services for persons with disabilities had been expanded over the previous five years across all the provinces and wilayahs, with the number of Wafa' centres for the rehabilitation of children with disabilities increasing to 26 and the number of special rehabilitation centres rising from 7 to 31. The Diagnostic and Disability Assessment Unit had been set up in the Directorate General for Persons with Disabilities and was working in cooperation with the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Education to develop

diagnostic, assessment and intervention mechanisms tailored to individual needs. A range of actions had been taken to ensure equal opportunities in the area of education and employment, including the awarding of full scholarships to 50 persons annually for study at higher education institutions in Oman and abroad. Under the vocational integration programme, persons with motor and hearing disabilities were enrolled in vocational training centres affiliated to the Ministry of Manpower, which offered new specialized courses for persons with disabilities that met the demands of the labour market. Persons with disabilities could also receive training in some professional fields alongside peers who did not have disabilities. By the end of 2017, a total of 1,752 students with hearing and mental disabilities had been enrolled in public schools, and 1,095 persons with disabilities had been employed in the public sector and 1,451 in the private sector, some of them in senior supervisory and planning positions.

7. In January 2018 the National Committee for the Care of Persons with Disabilities had approved the preparation of a manual on the specifications for accessibility of the built environment. In 2013, the Ministry of Social Development had organized a training workshop on the implementation of article 9 of the Convention for persons working in the public and private sectors. The Sixth Scientific Conference on Information and Communication Technology and Accessibility had been held in Oman in December 2017. A workshop had been held in April 2017 with the participation of 70 State agencies to assess the role of each institution in accordance with the Convention. A panel discussion had been held in January 2018 with the participation of persons with disabilities and 65 representatives of NGOs and private and public institutions to review the State party report and replies to the list of issues and the new bill on the rights of persons with disabilities. Regular meetings had been held since 2011 with NGOs, public and private rehabilitation centres and specialists in the field of disability. Workshops on the Convention had been organized in partnership with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) for 297 participants in April 2014.

8. Among the most fundamental challenges faced were the need for early detection and diagnosis of disability, the lack of specialists working in the field of disability, the lack of reliable data on disability and the need for additional financial resources. Through future five-year plans, the Government would seek to make a paradigm shift in the field of disability and strike a balance between incorporating the rights of persons with disabilities into public policies, on the one hand, and targeting support in accordance with individual needs and removing community barriers, on the other.

9. **Mr. Al Hosni** (Oman Human Rights Commission) said that the Commission was an independent national institution comprising 14 members with a mandate to promote and protect human rights in Oman. The Commission commended the Government's efforts in establishing a national committee for the implementation of the recommendations of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and providing a platform for consultation with all stakeholders on the bill on the rights of persons with disabilities. It also welcomed the formulation of the action plan to further promote and protect the rights of persons with disabilities. The Commission had made a number of recommendations that it considered critical to further improving the status of persons with disabilities, particularly when it came to access to education and employment and awareness of their rights and obligations. Given that negative cultural attitudes towards disability persisted, the Commission recommended that education and awareness-raising programmes should be promoted intensively.

10. **Mr. Basharu** (Country Rapporteur) said that the Committee was grateful to the Government of Oman for submitting its initial report in a timely manner. It also appreciated the reports of the various organizations of persons with disabilities and civil society organizations. The Government of Oman was to be commended on the various legal and practical measures taken to promote and protect the rights of persons with disabilities, including the establishment of the Directorate-General for Persons with Disabilities and the adoption of the Care and Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities Act. However, the Act did not prohibit discrimination on the basis of disability. Moreover, disability continued to be defined on the basis of a medical approach, and assessment criteria for eligibility for services still focused on the degree of impairment of persons with disabilities, resulting in

exclusion, particularly of persons with psychosocial and intellectual disabilities. Several laws provided for practices that were discriminatory towards persons with disabilities, and laws, policies and Government documents contained derogatory language. Sign language was not recognized as an official language for deaf persons; such recognition was essential in order to address their isolation, as was effective teaching of sign language in schools.

11. Discrimination and violence against women and girls with disabilities persisted, and there was no specific law under which victims could lodge complaints and seek reparations and protection from perpetrators. Women and girls with disabilities were not systematically mainstreamed into the gender equality agenda, and they had low levels of participation in public and political life and little to no representation in NGOs. Female genital mutilation was widely accepted, especially in rural areas, and "honour" crimes, including the killing of children with disabilities, were widespread. The Committee was concerned that many girls had no chance of going to school, not necessarily because of the school system itself, but because of their parents' ignorance, coupled with the fear of abuse. It was also concerned at the high rate of illiteracy among persons with disabilities, particularly women and girls in rural areas. It was necessary to raise awareness of the Convention and the rights of persons with disabilities among the general public in order to dispel the negative perceptions of persons with disabilities in society.

Articles 1–10

12. **Mr. Chaker** said that he would welcome information on measures taken to protect children with disabilities from "honour crimes", especially infanticide, and on the prevalence of such crimes.

13. **Mr. Ishikawa** said that the delegation might comment on whether denial of reasonable accommodation was considered a form of discrimination under Omani law. He would also welcome information on how the State party went about resolving disagreements about whether requests for reasonable accommodation constituted an undue burden.

14. **Mr. Langvad** said that he would be grateful for information on measures adopted to ensure the accessibility of information and communication, in particular for persons with intellectual disabilities, and the provision of sign language interpretation for deaf persons by qualified and certified sign language interpreters.

15. **Mr. Ruskus** said that he would like to hear about the steps being taken to mainstream the provisions of the Convention across national legislation and about the outcomes of policies and strategies adopted specifically to ensure the social inclusion and full participation of persons with all kinds of disabilities. Expressing concern about derogatory language used in some State party reports, he asked what efforts were being made to align the terminology used with the Convention. He would appreciate an explanation of the criteria used in defining disability status, given that the percentage of persons with disabilities in the State party according to the results of the 2010 census — 3.2 per cent — seemed surprisingly low. He would also like to hear about the situation of children with intellectual and psychosocial disabilities, including autism, and the education and early intervention services available to them.

16. **Mr. Parra Dussan** asked whether the State party intended to expressly prohibit discrimination on the basis of disability. He also wished to know what steps had been taken to conduct national awareness-raising campaigns *to combat prejudice and promote greater* acceptance of persons with disabilities.

17. **Mr. Tatić** asked what efforts had been made to ensure that children with disabilities had equal access to the temporary shelters designed for child victims of violence, exploitation or ill-treatment. He would like to know how many people had participated in the accessibility training courses held in 2013 and whether similar training sessions would be organized on a regular basis in future. Further information about the process of granting building permits would also be welcome, including whether planning permission had ever been denied in cases where building plans failed to include all the facilities required to permit the use of the building by persons with disabilities. Lastly, he would like to know

whether appropriate accessibility provisions had been made to ensure barrier-free access for persons with disabilities who wished to visit Oman for tourism or business purposes.

18. **Mr. Pyaneandee** said that articles 12 (4) and (5) of the Basic Law of the State, which referred to "infirmity" and "preventive and curative public health care", appeared to evidence a medicalized view of disability that was inconsistent with the Convention. He would appreciate a comment from the delegation in that regard. He also wished to know what steps had been taken to promote the participation of women and girls with disabilities and their representative organizations in national policy formulation and implementation. He would like to hear what legislative measures had been adopted to implement article 5 of the Convention, particularly with regard to reasonable accommodation. Lastly, he wondered whether a mechanism was in place to enable victims of discrimination to lodge complaints and whether the Oman Human Rights Commission was empowered to deal effectively with such complaints.

19. **Mr. You** Liang said that he would have liked to have seen more persons with disabilities included in the State party's delegation. He would like further information regarding the concrete measures taken to implement the Convention. For example, what steps had been taken to improve access to reproductive health services for women with disabilities, particularly those with intellectual and psychosocial disabilities? Information on the steps taken to promote the economic independence of women with disabilities would also be welcome. As for children with disabilities, he wished to know what efforts had been made to ensure that they had access to early intervention and rehabilitation services and appropriate educational facilities.

20. **Mr. Buntan** said that he was curious to know why there were so few complaints of discrimination in the State party. Was discrimination simply not an issue in Oman? He would like to hear what specific measures had been adopted to combat the discrimination faced by persons with disabilities. He also wished to know what steps had been taken to systematically promote the participation of organizations of persons with disabilities in the formulation, implementation and monitoring of national legislation and policies. Lastly, he asked what efforts had been made to include specific protections for the rights of women and girls with disabilities in national policies aimed at promoting the rights of women and girls in general.

21. **Mr. Martin** asked what action had been taken to promote a human rights approach to disability and to include organizations of persons with disabilities in the planning and delivery of national awareness-raising campaigns. He also wished to know what training on the rights of persons with disabilities had been provided to government officials, officials of the judicial system and representatives of the media.

22. **Mr. Lovászy** asked whether the relevant national authorities took into account the views of children with disabilities regarding their needs and interests. He also wondered what safeguards were in place to protect the rights of children with disabilities in the areas of education, health and rehabilitation. He wished to know whether persons with disabilities and their representative organizations had participated in the measures taken to combat stereotypes and prejudices surrounding disability and whether schools had been targeted in the national media's awareness-raising campaigns. In addition, he would like further information on the outcome of the 2012 digital access policy and on the availability of assistive technologies and the implementation of legally binding information and communication technology standards. He wondered why the Government had decided to postpone the introduction of sign language training sessions for health-care professionals and whether it had a timetable for improving conditions for the teaching of sign language.

23. **Mr. Alsaif** asked what steps had been taken to promote a human rights approach, rather than a medical approach, to disability in all areas of society. He also wished to know whether the State party had specific legislation on accessibility and whether any sanctions had been imposed on government entities or public bodies that failed to comply with accessibility requirements.

24. **Mr. Babu** asked whether parents of children with disabilities were able to become members of the child protection committees set up to safeguard children who had been exposed to violence. He also wished to know, in the context of the national strategic plan to

create a barrier-free society, whether architecture, engineering and construction courses included mandatory training on accessibility and universal design.

25. **Mr. Rukhledev** said that he would like to know whether persons with sensory impairments had access to appropriate assistive and information and communication technologies. He would also like to hear what measures were in place to ensure that such persons could access information and services in emergency situations.

26. **Mr. Basharu** asked what measures had been taken to tackle the multiple forms of discrimination faced by women and girls with disabilities and to increase their participation in education, work and employment. He also wished to know what efforts had been made to involve persons with disabilities and their representative organizations in awareness-raising campaigns and what measures had been taken to eliminate discriminatory laws relating to marriage and family life and to combat stereotypes, prejudices and harmful practices relating to persons with disabilities.

27. **Mr. Kabue** asked what complaint mechanisms were available to persons with disabilities who wished to report discrimination, including the denial of reasonable accommodation. He would also like to know what steps had been taken to implement the provisions of the 2008 Care and Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities Act and to involve persons with disabilities and their representative organizations in the formulation of legislation relating to their well-being.

28. **The Chair**, noting the references to preventive and curative health care in the Basic Law, asked whether the State party intended to adopt a more human rights-based approach to disability.

The meeting was suspended at 4.15 p.m. and resumed at 4.35 p.m.

29. **Mr. Al Adawi** (Oman) said that, in regard to measures to prevent honour killings, the Government had introduced strict legislation to protect children, particularly those living in institutions, from becoming victims of any type of criminal offence. Article 303 of the Criminal Code prescribed a penalty of between 3 and 10 years' imprisonment for women who killed a child conceived out of wedlock. The Children's Act devoted an entire section to the rights of children with disabilities with a view to protecting them from ill-treatment and abuse. Child victims of violence, abuse or exploitation were entitled to rehabilitation pursuant to article 59. The Act also provided for the establishment of child protection committees to receive and examine complaints and to have perpetrators of abuse arrested and prosecuted. Offences could also be reported via hotlines, and the anonymity of callers was guaranteed. Child protection officers could recommend that child victims should be placed in temporary shelters by order of the Public Prosecution Service.

30. The Children's Act also contained a section concerning penalties and civil damages. Furthermore, article 278 of the Criminal Code prescribed penalties of imprisonment for between 10 days and 6 months and/or a fine of between 100 and 500 Omani riyals for perpetrators of abuse against children, including children with disabilities.

31. **Mr. Al Farsi** (Oman) said that there had been a significant quantitative and qualitative improvement in health-care services for persons with disabilities since 1970. With a view to preventing disability, an antenatal care programme for pregnant women had been launched in 1987. It provided for early screening to detect congenital anomalies and for prompt surgical interventions free of charge. Such services were available to both citizens and residents in all governorates and regions. A survey conducted in 2008 had found that more than 50 per cent of marriages were consanguineous. As such marriages were associated with a higher risk of genetic diseases in offspring, the competent authorities encouraged young people to undergo premarital screenings. A pioneering screening programme had been launched in September 2017 to detect autism and related intellectual disabilities. The requisite care was provided for persons with such disabilities throughout their lives.

32. **Mr. Al Abri** (Oman) said that vigorous action was being taken to provide reasonable accommodation for persons with disabilities and to ensure accessibility. For instance, the building code that had been applied to the new Muscat International Airport, which would be inaugurated on 20 March 2018, complied with applicable international

standards. Special services were available for people in wheelchairs and assistance was provided for the recovery of their luggage. Reasonable accommodation services were also provided in public transport vehicles. Seats were designated for persons with disabilities and all buses contained ramps for wheelchairs. The needs of persons with disabilities were also taken into account in public toilets and at traffic lights. Training courses on reasonable accommodation and accessibility were provided for engineers in different municipalities to ensure that new buildings met international standards.

33. Article 9 of the Care and Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities Act required governmental departments and employers to recruit a quota of persons with disabilities to enable them to participate actively in accordance with their skills and qualifications. Article 11 of the Act required the authorities to facilitate the participation of persons with disabilities in sporting and cultural activities. They were also exempted from taxes on residential land and were provided with soft loans for real estate purchases.

34. **Mr. Al Shabibi** (Oman) said that the Information Technology Authority had taken action to render communication technology accessible for persons with disabilities. Most if not all ministries had launched audio systems to facilitate access to their websites and hence to raise awareness of the rights and services available to persons with disabilities. Public transport vehicles were equipped with Internet and WiFi connections so that commuters with disabilities could use their mobile phones and make any calls they required to reach their destinations.

35. Sign language had now been adopted as an official language. Television news bulletins and many other programmes were currently interpreted into sign language. Sign language interpreters were available throughout legal proceedings. The Ministry of Social Development had established the Omani Association for Persons with Hearing Impairments to disseminate sign language. A specialized training institute with experts appointed by the Ministry had been established to disseminate and raise awareness of sign language and to provide training courses.

36. **Ms. Asadullah** (Oman) said that the Ministry of Education had established schools in all areas of every governorate, including in the mountains and remote areas. The Ministry maintained detailed enrolment statistics, which were used to determine the types of disability that were prevalent in each area and the need for appropriate educational services. The Ministry had appointed assistants to ensure that young girls with disabilities were not harassed when travelling to school by bus. The effectiveness of the educational services provided for women with disabilities was reflected in the fact that women with visual and hearing impairments had performed extremely well in examinations for high-level diplomas. For instance, a blind woman in Musandam Governorate had achieved a grade of 89 per cent, a woman with a hearing impairment in Sharqiyah South Governorate had achieved 91 per cent and another woman with a hearing impairment in Buraymi Governorate had achieved 89 per cent. Schools were equipped with advanced electronic devices to ensure that information was accessible for pupils with disabilities. The Ministry of Education had concluded a coordination agreement with UNICEF on training courses in sign language for 200 teachers.

37. **Mr. Al Amri** (Omani Association for Persons with Disabilities) said that his Association cooperated with governmental bodies in raising awareness of the needs of persons with disabilities. In 2000 it had begun work on a project, in coordination with Muscat and other regional municipalities, aimed at providing the necessary infrastructure for persons with disabilities. Muscat Municipality had adopted Decision 6/2000 on rendering toilets and escalators accessible for persons with disabilities. No building permits were granted unless the applicable building code was respected, and inspections were conducted by engineers to ensure compliance.

38. His Association also cooperated with the Ministry of Social Development. For instance, the Ministry had consulted it when drafting the Care and Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities Act promulgated in 2008. It was also involved in ensuring that the new bill on the rights of persons with disabilities complied with the provisions of the Convention. Persons who violated the building code or other regulations relating to persons with disabilities would be fined under the new legislation. The new act would also provide for an

increase, from 2 to 5 per cent, in the proportion of persons with disabilities employed in the public sector. The practice of consulting the Omani Association for Persons with Disabilities had encouraged governmental bodies to move from a welfare-based to a rights-based approach to disability in legislative and decision-making processes.

39. **Mr. Al Shidhani** (Omani Association for Persons with Hearing Impairments), confirming that sign language interpretation was provided for many television broadcasts and for legal proceedings, said that such interpretation was also provided for parliamentary and municipal council meetings and during elections. Interpretation services were provided in shelters and rehabilitation centres and to facilitate communication between children and their parents in family guidance cases. The Omani Association for Persons with Hearing Impairments had organized sign language training courses for 27 persons in all the country's governorates and monitored developments in that regard. Training courses for medical personnel had also been organized in cooperation with the Ministry of Health, and an agreement had been reached on the inclusion of sign language in health-related courses in 13 training establishments with a view to raising awareness of the communication needs of persons with hearing impairments. The need for assistive devices, especially for children with disabilities, was underscored.

40. **Mr. Al Adawi** (Oman) said that Oman had ratified the Convention by Royal Decree No. 121/2008. It therefore had force of law pursuant to article 80 of the Basic Law, which stipulated that no authority could issue rules or regulations that contravened international treaties ratified by Oman. The Ministry of Legal Affairs reviewed legislation and decisions prior to their publication in the Official Gazette to ensure that they complied with the Basic Law and ratified treaties. The Care and Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities Act had been adopted in 2008, just before the ratification of the Convention, and all branches of Government had taken steps to ensure that it complied with the provisions of the Convention. Instructions had been issued to ensure that all public buildings and services were accessible, and non-compliance was punishable.

41. The bill on persons with disabilities that was currently being drafted reflected the provisions of the Convention. It contained seven sections that addressed, inter alia, the right to education, health, employment, culture and sport, and economic rights. There was also a specific section on the rights of women and children with disabilities. Existing laws criminalized the abuse of women and children. The fact that a victim was under the age of 15 or had a disability that prevented him or her from defending him or herself was an aggravating circumstance in cases of violence and indecent assault. Victims were provided with care and rehabilitation services. The anti-trafficking law specifically referred to persons with disabilities and made the victim's age, disability and relationship with the trafficker aggravating circumstances. Trafficking victims were informed of their rights in a language they understood and were entitled to treatment and rehabilitation. Heavier penalties were imposed in cases where the victims were persons with disabilities.

42. **Mr. Al Mutawa** (Oman) said that the membership of the Committee for Training and Employing Persons with Disabilities had been decided on the recommendation of the Omani Association of Persons with Disabilities. The purpose of the Committee was to encourage the private sector to provide employment opportunities for persons with disabilities in accordance with their disability and qualifications. In addition, training for persons with disabilities had been provided since 2016 in areas such as electronics, marketing, painting, decorating and upholstering, food processing, and car mechanics. A sign language course for teachers was also available.

43. **Mr. Al Farsi** (Oman) said that it was not accurate to describe the Sultanate as taking a welfare approach to disability. Its approach was human rights-based and was designed to empower both persons with disabilities and their families. For example, the Government had sent 15 families to the United States of America to take part in the Son-Rise training programme on the treatment of children with autism, and the country's first school for children with autism would be opened in the near future. The Sultanate also promoted an evidence-based approach to disability, and the number of scientific studies conducted in the country in the area of disability exceeded the number of studies in all other areas. Some of the Sultanate's highest scientific and academic positions had been and were held by persons with disabilities.

44. **Mr. Al Shabibi** (Oman) said that the definition of disability contained in the Care and Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities Act had been adopted prior to the ratification of the Convention. The Government was aware that that Act reflected a medical approach and had taken steps to bring subsequent legislation into line with the Convention. The Children's Act, for example, contained a definition of "child with disabilities" that was close to the definition in the Convention, and the new bill on the rights of persons with disabilities would contain wording identical to that of the Convention. The Government had used the Convention as a reference in addressing the matter of terminology, leading to a ban across government bodies on the use of the term "person with special needs". Furthermore, the Government was working with UNICEF on a unified classification of disabilities that was in keeping with the Convention. In that connection, a workshop bringing together international experts and representatives of government entities working on disability issues had been held the previous month.

45. A hotline had been set up to receive complaints of abuse, whether physical, psychological or sexual, against children, including those with disabilities. Any complaints thus received were dealt with by means of the applicable legal process. The Oman Olympic Committee was strongly attached to promoting the participation of athletes with disabilities in the Paralympic Games. According to statistics from a 2010 census conducted using indicators developed by the Washington Group on Disability Statistics, the disability rate in Oman was 3.2 per cent. Other methods might have yielded higher levels, but the method had been chosen as part of government efforts to establish a suitable definition of disability and set up a modern database to keep better records and accurately determine disability rates. The Government planned to carry out a new, electronic census, applying the latest standards in the field, in 2020. The Official Gazette had been published in Braille since 2005.

Articles 11–20

46. **Mr. Basharu** asked what measures had been put in place to provide judicial personnel with training in disability issues, including the provision of procedural accommodations, and to disseminate legal information in accessible formats, such as Braille, sign language and Easy Read. He wished to know whether there were plans to develop a national policy on training professionals to teach mobility skills to blind persons.

47. **Mr. Rukhledev** asked whether sign language interpretation was provided to deaf persons if they were arrested by the police and during judicial proceedings. If so, how were the qualifications of the interpreters assessed and were organizations of deaf persons involved in the assessment?

48. **Mr. Alsaif** asked whether measures were in place to ensure the safety of persons with disabilities and provide them with assistance during situations of emergency or risk and whether assisted decision-making mechanisms were in place for persons with mental disabilities.

49. **Mr. Chaker** asked whether the State party provided services and benefits to persons with disabilities, especially those who did not enjoy the support of family, with the aim of enabling them to live independently in the community. For example, were there transportation subsidies and allowances to cover disability-related costs?

50. **Mr. Kabue** said that the Care and Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities Act of 2008 did not appear to address the legal capacity of persons with disabilities or provide for supported decision-making mechanisms; he would like to know what plans there were to correct those shortcomings. The practice of committing persons with psychosocial disabilities to institutions on the grounds that they might pose a danger to themselves or others was contrary to the Convention; accordingly, he wished to know what steps were being taken to prohibit the practice. It would also be helpful to know whether the concept of independent living was promoted in the State party and whether persons with disabilities whose rights had been violated were eligible for free legal aid.

51. **Mr. Lovászy** asked whether any tangible, legally binding measures had been adopted or would be adopted within a reasonable time frame following the April 2017 workshop on access to justice. He would appreciate further information on the role and

independence of the National Committee for the Care of Persons with Disabilities and its status within the national system. Further details on the use of sign language in the public and private sectors would also be appreciated; specifically which government institutions did not use sign language and which private sector entities were required to use sign language for official business?

52. **Mr. Kim** Hyung Shik asked how many persons with disabilities lived in institutions and what measures, if any, were in place to promote deinstitutionalization.

53. **Mr. Ruskus** asked whether forced committal on grounds of disability was legal in the State party under any circumstances, including committal of persons with intellectual or psychosocial disabilities for purposes of treatment or protection. He wished to know what legislative and administrative safeguards had been or would be adopted to ensure that persons were not institutionalized or otherwise deprived of their liberty on account of actual or perceived impairments.

54. **Mr. Buntan** asked how the State party usually circulated information on disaster preparedness to persons with various types of disabilities. Were persons with intellectual or psychosocial disabilities considered fit to stand trial when accused of an offence? If so, what measures were in place to guarantee their right to a fair trial?

55. **Mr. Martin** said that he would like specific information about the situation of persons with intellectual disabilities in Oman.

56. **Mr. Babu** said that there was a clear discrepancy between the constitutional provision whereby all citizens were equal before the law and equal in rights and duties and the Civil Code, which mandated guardianship for persons with disabilities and denied them the right to exercise legal capacity on the basis of impairment. Were there plans to harmonize the two instruments?

57. **The Chair**, noting the State party's position that domestic and sexual violence against women was not a significant enough problem to warrant a specific law, asked what measures were in place to combat that type of violence against women with disabilities.

The meeting rose at 5.55 p.m.